

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LISBON 01403 132308Z

70

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 /026 W

----- 039655

O R 132254Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2076

INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 1403

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: RISING TENSIONS: COSTA GOMES STATEMENT

1. EARLIER TONIGHT RADIO SAID COSTA GOMES WOULD MAKE STATE-
MENT ON MINISTERIAL CHANGES AT 8:30 P.M. LOCAL.

2. AT 11:00 P.M. COSTA GOMES MADE A NON-SPEECH LASTING
ABOUT 10 MINUTES. PRAISED AIR FORCE LOYALTY AND SAID COUP
WAS TREASON BY SMALL GROUP AND WARNED THAT NUCLEI OF RESISTANCE
CONTINUED TO EXIST. NOT MUCH ELSE. SPEECH CAME OVER
TELEVISION BUT PHOTO OF PRESIDENT SUBSTITUTED FOR LIVE COVERAGE.

3. COMMENT: WE HESITATE TO READ TOO MUCH INTO THIS, BUT
INTENSE BEHIND SCENES STRUGGLE OBVIOUSLY GOING ON. WE ALSO
WONDER WHY COSTA GOMES FAILED APPEAR PERSONALLY, BUT THEN HE
IS KNOWN TO DISLIKE PERSONAL APPEARANCES. WE HAVE TWO
HYPOTHESES: (1) SPEECH DESIGNED TO HELP DEAL WITH APPARENT LEFT
WING ENLISTED MAN'S REVOLT AT AIR BASE 5; (2) NON-SPEECH
WAS LAST MINUTE SUBSTITUTE BECAUSE AFM COULD NOT AGREE
ON WHATEVER IT WAS THEY WANTED TO ANNOUNCE. EMBASSY THINKS
LATTER IS MOST LIKELY, BUT TWO PURPOSES NOT MUTUALLY INCONSISTENT.
WHILE RUMORS OF MILITARY REVOLT PERSIST, WE THINK PRESENT
STRUGGLE INVOLVES POWER BALANCE IN WAKE OF ABORTIVE COUP
RATHER THAN REMNANTS OF COUP OR NEW UPRISINGS OF SIGNIFICANT
PROPORTIONS.

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